

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THESSA 00589 011018Z

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FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2456

S E C R E T THESSALONIKI 0589

FOR EUR/SE/GRK - MR. DAY FROM CONSUL GENERAL

E.O. 11652: GBU

TAGS: OGEN, GR

SUBJECT: UTILITY OF POST

REF: DAY- BRENNAN TELECON SEPT 29, 1975

FOLLOWING IN RESPONSE YOUR REQUEST MADE REF:

1. CONGEN THESSALONIKI IS CHARGED WITH FULL RANGE OF FOREIGN SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES. IN TERMS OF IMPORTANCE, POLITICAL REPORTING, TRADE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULAR SERVICES SHARE FIRST PRIORITY, WHILE ECONOMIC REPORTING IN SUPPORT OF EMBASSY'S COUNTRY-WIDE RESPONSIBILITIES IS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE.

2. LARGE AMOUNT OF AMERICAN INVESTMENT IS LOCATED IN NORTHERN GREECE. ALTHOUGH EXACT FIGURES OF ITS VALUE ARE NOT AVAILABLE, FOLLOWING GIVES SOME IDEA OF ITS MAGNITUDE.

(A) ESSO-PAPPAS -- PETROLEUM MFG. CO., SECOND LARGEST PETROLEUM REFINERY IN GREECE SUPPLYING ALL THE NORTHERN GREEK MARKET AND SOME EXPORTS. A COMPANION, BUT SEPARATE AND IMPORTANT, COMPANY IS THE ESSO-PAPPAS CHEMICAL MFG. CO.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 THESSA 00589 011018Z

(B) ETHYL-HELLAS -- ONLY LEAD TETRAETHYL FACILITY IN

GREECE. EXPORTS ALONE AMOUNT TO \$35 MILLION ANNUALLY.

(C) HELLENIC STEEL -- LARGEST STEEL MILL IN NORTHERN GREECE AND ONE OF LARGEST IN COUNTRY, WITH MAJOR EXPORTA TRADE.

(D) OCEANIC EXPLORATION -- COMPANY IS DEVELOPING PETROLEUM DEPOSITS NEAR KAVALLA. TO MEET ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS WITH GOG IT HAS RECENTLY RAISED \$250 MILLION IN FINANCING.

(E) GOODYEAR HELLAS -- GREECE'S SECOND LARGEST TIRE FACTORY AND LARGEST IN NORTHERN GREECE.

(F) ROGERS ADVANCED PROSPECTING -- AMERICAN COMPANY ENGAGED IN MAJOR PETROLEUM EXPLORATION WORK NEAR KAVALLA.

(G) OTHER AMERICAN COMPANIES WITH PLANTS IN THESSALONIKI AND ENVIRONS ARE HELLENIC BOTTLING (COCA COLA), MAGNOMIN (MAGNESITE EXTRACTION), XYLOPAN (PLYWOOD AND OTHER WOOD PRODUCTS), ST. REGIS - HELLAS (PAPER) AND NATIONAL CAN. TOBACCO BUYERS FROM FOUR MAJOR AMERICAN COMPANIES CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE TRADE HERE, WHILE BETHLEHEM STEEL IS REPRESENTED WITH AN EXPLORATION TEAM.

(H) FIVE AMERICAN BANKS, AMERICAN EXPRESS, BANK OF AMERICA, CHASE MANHATTAN, CONTINENTAL ILLINOIS AND FIRST NATIONAL CITY BANK HAVE OFFICES IN THESSALONIKI.

3. CONTAINING NATION'S SECOND LARGEST CITY AND EXTENDED BORDER AREAS WITH TURKEY, BULGARIA, YUGOSLAVIA AND ALBANIA, CONSULAR DISTRICT OF MACEDONIA AND THRACE IS PERHAPS GREECE'S MOST SENSITIVE REGION. ITS UNIQUE POLITICAL AND MILITARY STATUS IS REFLECTED IN ASSIGNMINT TO THESSALONIKI OF ONLY CABINET MEMBER OUTSIDE ATHENS IN ORDER TO DIRECTLY SUPERVISE DISTRICT (CURRENT MINISTER IS LONG TIME AND TRUSTED COHORT OF PM). IT HAS LONG HISTORY OF POLITICAL FERMENT SINCE ITS BELATED ACQUISITION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM TURKEY -- VENIZELOS GOVERNMENT,
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SECRET

PAGE 03 THESSA 00589 011018Z

RED KAVALA, GUERRILLA WAR, LAMBRAKIS AFFAIR, ETC. TURKISH MINORITY AND MACEDONIAN ISSUES CENTERED HERE ARE NEVER FAR BELOW SURFACE OF PUBLIC SENSITIVITY. WITH BULK OF GREEK ARMY POSITIONED IN NORTH, POST PROVIDES DEPT AND EMBASSY INFORMATION NOT READILY AVAILABLE IN CAPITAL TO ASSIST IN ANALYZING MOOD AND INTENTIONS OF GOVERNMENT. EXTENDED REPORTING BY POST OF MENACING BUILD-UP ON EVROS FROM MARCH UNTIL OUTBREAK

OF CYPRUS CRISIS LAST YEAR IS GOOD EXAMPLE. POST ALSO PROVIDES DEPT AND EMBASSY WITH CONTINUING FLOW OF INFORMATION ON POLITICAL VIEWS AND ATTITUDES IN GREEK PROVINCES WHICH IS NOT OBTAINABLE FROM ATHENS VANTAGE POINT, BUT ESSENTIAL TO ROUNDED APPRECIATION OF NATIONAL SENTIMENT. GREECE'S LARGEST UNIVERSITY IS HERE, AS ARE THE POLITICAL CONSTITUENCIES OF TWO OF ITS MOST PROMINENT POLITICIANS, KARAMANLIS AND PAPANDREOU. IMPORTANCE OF REGION REFLECTED IN PRESENCE HERE OF CONSULAR REPRESENTATION OF ALL FOUR MAJOR WEST EUROPEAN POWERS, PLUS TURKEY, YUGOSLAVIA, AUSTRALIA, BULGARIA, SOON ROMANIA, AND SOME SOVIET SNIFFING REPORTED.

4. THERE IS ALSO CONSIDERABLE DOMESTIC U.S. POLITICAL INTEREST IN NORTHERN GREECE CENTERED AROUND THREE IMPORTANT AMERICAN-SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS, THE AHEPA HOSPITAL, THESSALONIKI'S AND PERHAPS GREECE'S FINEST, ANATOLIA COLLEGE, AND AMERICAN FARM SCHOOL. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO INTEREST CREATED BY U.S. INVESTMENTS AND APPROXIMATELY 4,000 AMERICAN CITIZENS IN AREA, INCLUDING A LARGE CONTINGENT OF GREEK AMERICANS WHO OPERATE THE THRIVING KASTORIA FUR INDUSTRY. FINALLY, CONGEN PROVIDES SOME LOGISTIC SUPPORT TO PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS OF FOUR USA/USAF MISSILE SITES AND ONE USAF COMMUNICATIONS STATION IN NORTHERN GREECE, TO AMERICAN STAFF OF LANDSOUTHEAST'S ADVANCED COMMAND POST HERE, AND TO USA'S FOREIGN AREA SPECIALIST STUDENT AT GREEK HIGHER WAR COLLEGE. WHILE STATION IS LARGELY SELF-SUFFICIENT, VOICA OF AMERICA'S DASSOHORI INSTALLATION IS WITHIN THIS CONSULAR DISTRICT AND POST SERVES AS BACK-UP FACILITY TO THIS OPERATION AND ITS PERSONNEL.

5. TRADE DEVELOPMENT IS PERFORMED BY POLITICAL/ECONOMIC
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 THESSA 00589 011018Z

OFFICER SUPPORTED BY TWO LOCAL ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL ASSISTANTS. SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS INCLUDE:

(A) HEAVY INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT FOR U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FAIR (TIF), GREECE'S LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT TRADE FAIR.

(B) WRITING, EDITING, PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTING BI-MONTHLY GREEK-LANGUAGE COMMERCIAL BULLETIN, MAILED TO APPROXIMATELY 1200 BUSINESSMEN THROUGHOUT GREECE. THIS IS ONLY USG GREEK-LANGUAGE COMMERCIAL BULLETIN IN COUNTRY.

(C) ORGANIZATION OF U.S. PARTICIPATION AT VERTICAL TRADE FAIRS UNDER AEGIS OF THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FAIR.

WITHIN PAST YEAR CONSULATE GENERAL HAS ORGANIZED PARTICIPATION AT 2 OF 3 VERTICAL FAIRS HELD BY TIF.

(D) PROMOTION OF SHOWS AT U.S. TRADE CENTERS THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND U.S., AND OF U.S. PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL FAIRS IN THIRD COUNTRIES OF EUROPE. WITHIN PAST YEAR CONSULATE GENERAL HAS PROMOTED ALL MAJOR SHOWS OF THIS TYPE THROUGH ITS COMMERCIAL BULLETIN AND BY DIRECT MAILINGS, AND HAS ORGANIZED 4 GROUPS OF NORTHERN GREEK BUSINESSMEN TO VISIT U.S. SHOWS IN ITALY AND YUGOSLAVIA.

(E) MAINTENANCE OF COMPLETE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY ON FIRST FLOOR OF NSULATE BUILDING FOR NORTHERN GREEK BUSINESSMEN.

(F) DEVELOPMENT AND EXPLOITATION OF TRADE OPPORTUNITIES UNDER TRADE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM. IN FY 1974 153 T.O.'S WERE SUBMITTED, IN FY 1975 105 (FY 1975 WAS UNUSUAL YEAR BECAUSE OF CYPRUS CRISIS WHICH DEPRESSED BUSINESS ACTIVITY DUE TO UNCERTAIN POLITICAL CLIMATE AND A GENERAL MOBILIZATION, INCLUDING CALL-UP OF FSL PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR T.O.'S). TO DATE IN FY 1976, 21 T.O.'S HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED AND WE EXPECT SIGNIFICANT INCREASE AS SUMMER VACATION SEASON ENDS.

(G) PREPARATION OF WORLD TRADE DIRECTORY REPORTS OF WHICH SECRET

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PAGE 05 THESSA 00589 011018Z

22 WERE SUBMITTED IN FY 1975, 2 HAVE BEEN COMPLETED TO DATE IN FY 1976 AND 2 ARE IN PREPARATION.

6. STATUTORY CONSULAR FUNCTIONS OF CONSULATE GENERAL ARE PERFORMED BY ONE VICE CONSUL AND 7 LOCAL EMPLOYEES. THESE HAVE INCLUDED FOLLOWING, IN ADDITION TO INNUMERABLE CASES OF ASSISTANCE TO U.S. CITIZENS AND PROTECTION AND WELFARE WORK:

FY 1974 FY 1975 PROJECTED FY 1976

IMM VISAS	1287	1071	1220
NON-IMM VISAS	1876	2019	2300
PASSPORTS ISSUED	260	383	400
NOTARIALS	1200	2221	2500
OTHER AGENCY SERVICES	500	980	1050

7. TRANSFER OF ANY OF THESE FUNCTIONS FROM THESSALONIKI, IN ALL LIKELIHOOD TO ATHENS, WOULD RESULT IN EITHER THEIR COMPLETE LOSS OR A SERIOUS DECREASE IN THEIR EFFECTIVENESS. POLITICAL AND POLITICO-MILITARY REPORTING FUNCTIONS, HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON PERSONAL CONTACTS AND

PRESENCE ON THE SPOT, WOULD BE LOST, EXCEPT FOR
SUPERFICIAL AND SPOTTY COVERAGE, AT BEST. OF THE
COMMERCIAL FUNCTIONS, 5 (E) AND (F) WOULD BE COMPLETELY
LOST, WHILE THE OTHERS COULD BE MAINTAINED ONLY TO
EXTENT THAT PERSONNEL WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE TO EXPLOIT
NORTHERN GREEK MARKET POTENTIAL FROM A DISTANCE. VISA AND
PASSPORT FUNCTIONS COULD BE PERFORMED IN ATHENS, WITH
POSSIBLY SOME INCREASE IN PERSONNEL, BUT ONLY AT GREAT
INCONVENIENCE TO THOSE IN NEED OF THESE SERVICES,
AT LEAST 300 MILES AWAY. PROTECTION AND WELFARE WORK
REQUIRING QUICK RESPONSE WOULD OBVIOUSLY BE A CASUALTY
TO THE TRANSFER.
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